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ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 301307Z MAY 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0562  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//JF/UNMA//  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3//  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFIUU/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2590  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2743  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6017  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1412

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 002472

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/FO (J. GASTRIGHT), SA/A, S/CR, SA/PAB,  
S/CT, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, KAMEND  
OSD FOR BREZINSKI  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD  
REL NATO/AUST/NZ/ISAF

E.O. 12958 N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/PANJSHIR Q BIG TEST FOR AMMO REMOVAL

KABUL 00002472 001.2 OF 003

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The UNDP/ANBP program to remove mines and ammunition from Panjshir is reaching a critical juncture. As it nears successful completion of work at the site of Parakh, it now takes on a greater challenge at Paranday, both in terms of depot size and local resistance. UNDP/ANBP officials report they will start at a slow pace and use Afghan trucks and personnel. The PRT is working behind the scenes to play a supportive role. Paranday was the scene of earlier confrontations over ammo removal and may be again. END SUMMARY.

State of Play

12. (SBU) The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) have removed over 650 loads by Kamaz truck from Panjshir after almost a year of work. Reftel (QAmo Removal Gains MomentumQ) reported on the mounting progress of the overall effort, while cautioning that the next big undertaking, at the Paranday depot, would be challenging. Paranday is located in central Panjshir, in a side valley seven km north of Massoud's tomb. It was the scene of two confrontations last year when locals stopped UN convoys. In the second incident December 13, the convoy came under fire.

13. (SBU) Recently, PRTers have been meeting with UNDP/ANBP officials in Panjshir and Kabul concerning next steps for the Mine and Ammunition Project in the province. These officials tell us:

-- Clearing of the Parakh site, part of the Governor's compound and next to the PRT office, is nearing completion. So far, UNDP/ANBP has removed 340 loads by Kamaz truck from Parakh. Most of the ammo is unserviceable and loose. Citing political sensitivity, the Governor slowed down the removal rate, which at one point reached up to twenty trucks per day, but is now down to two or three. UNDP/ANBP expects to wrap up work at the site by the end of May.

-- The next site, Paranday, is more challenging. Its ammo stocks are large: equivalent to 500 truck loads. The ammo is serviceable and packaged. It includes artillery shells, mortar rounds, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. There are several containers of pistols, but no AK-47s. Stocks are all of Soviet origin.

-- UNDP/ANBP intends to proceed with care as it restarts its work there in early June. In an agreement worked out with Panjshiri officials, UNDP/ANBP will use trucks from the Afghan Defense Ministry, and not from the UN. Only two trucks, loaded and driven by Afghans, will be in operation per day. After two weeks, UNDP/ANBP will reassess these modalities.

KABUL 00002472 002.2 OF 003

Afghan Role  
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14. (SBU) Several Panjshiris are playing key roles concerning ammo removal from Paranday. Panjshir Governor Bahlul blows hot and cold on the Paranday effort, according to a UNDP/ANBP official. The Governor told a visiting NATO delegation May 17 that ammo removal was proceeding well, but faced political opposition from Panjshiris concerned about the deterioration of security in southern Afghanistan. According to our contacts and our own observations, he is sensitive to local political pressure to go slow on removal. UNDP/ANBP officials plan to meet with him regularly and press for a security guarantee on Paranday.

15. (SBU) Deputy Governor Kabiri has the operational lead on Paranday among Panjshiri officials. He told us he is committed to seeing through the effort, but needs political and material support. He requested some humanitarian aid. He said some Afghan-funded projects were already underway there.

16. (SBU) Wolesei Jirga member Registani is becoming increasingly vocal in his opposition to ammo removal. This spring he started speaking on the matter at Panjshir mosques during Friday services. On May 12, the parliamentarian voiced his criticism at several mosques in the valley. He claims that ammo removal is a mistake given the need for Panjshiris to retain the ability to fight again against the Taliban, if necessary. Our contacts report that his themes resonate among the Panjshiris. UNDP/ANBP officials call him a bit of a problem. They have raised his opposition with Army Chief of Staff Bismullah Khan and are prepared

to go to First VP Massoud as well.

¶17. (SBU) Mallowi Mohammed Khan, who lives in Paranday across from the depot, reportedly instigated the attack on UNDP/ANBP in December. First VP Massoud ordered his arrest, but the religious leader was able to avoid it. Reportedly, he still resides in Paranday. He argues that ammo removal is ill-conceived for two main reasons: because the ammo is removed and then sold illegally to line the pockets of government officials; and because the central government is not capable of providing security for the country, as the resurgence of violence in the south demonstrates. According to UNDP/ANBP, he has agreed to accept ammo removal in Paranday, but only through a passive stance.

PRT Support  
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¶18. (SBU) On Paranday, the PRT is in close contact with the Governor and Deputy Governor, but do not intend to approach Registani or Mallowi Mohammed Khan. We will play a behind-the-scenes role. We met with the Deputy Governor to discuss possible projects in Paranday to ease the political controversy over ammo removal. Projects from both

KABUL 00002472 003.2 OF 003

military funding (CERP) and USAID funding (QIP) are under consideration. We will also work with ENTES, the contractor for the main road, to apprise Panjshiri officials when work will start near Paranday, expected this summer.

¶19. (SBU) PRTQers did a familiarization drive through Paranday May 27, accompanied by local police. They came upon a checkpoint at the southern end of the valley and used a narrow road climbing 3,000 feet in altitude. The ammo containers, over 50 in all, lined the road; some ammo and weapons were visible. The PRTQers encountered only sparse population. They located a middle school that could be a recipient of school supplies. They determined that Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development was working to improve the road and build a seven km retaining wall.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: There are nine depots surveyed by UNDP/ANBP in Panjshir, representing more than 1,500 truck loads of ammo and mines. The site in Paranday may be the most challenging, certainly from a political standpoint. The UNDP/ANBP strategy appears sound: building momentum at other sites, consulting closely with Afghan officials in Panjshir and Kabul, and starting cautiously in Paranday. The PRT will do its part. Nonetheless, ammo removal at Paranday still has the potential to turn confrontational. End Comment.

NEUMANN